

- 1 1. A method in a computer system for capturing and administering digital
2 images, comprising:
 - 3 (a) electronically receiving image data into an input module which is
4 configured to buffer a desired quantity of image data at any given time;
 - 5 (b) activating a trigger to create a trigger event;
 - 6 (c) in response to the trigger event, a processing module electronically
7 capturing a digital image from the image data received by the input
8 module;
 - 9 (d) in response to the trigger event, the processing module creating a data
10 structure and storing the digital image in the data structure along with
11 pre-defined identification data;
 - 12 (e) storing the data structure in a database; and
 - 13 (f) providing a user interface such that a user is allowed to use and access a
14 data structure stored in the database.
- 15 2. A method as in claim 1, wherein the user interface comprises a web
16 browser and further comprising a video signal generator generating the image data.
- 17 3. A method as in claim 2, wherein the web browser is configured to allow
18 the user to access the digital image through a computer network.
- 19 4. A method as in claim 2, wherein the web browser is configured to allow
20 the user to display, print, playback, and store the digital image on a remote computer.
- 21 5. A method as in claim 2, wherein the video signal generator is a video
22 camera.
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1 6. A method as in claim 5, wherein the image data transmitted from the video
2 camera is in digital format.

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4 7. A method as in claim 1, wherein the input module buffers the desired
5 quantity of image data according to the last in, first out (LIFO) protocol.

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7 8. A method as in claim 1, wherein the trigger is activated automatically
8 based on the passage of time.

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10 9. A method as in claim 1, wherein the trigger is activated manually by a
11 user.

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13 10. A method as in claim 1, further comprising:
14 storing the data structure in the database in response to the database being
15 available; and
16 storing the data structure in local storage in response to the database being
17 unavailable.

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19 11. A method as in claim 1, further comprising:
20 initially storing the data structure in local storage in response to the database
21 being unavailable ; and
22 transferring at least one data structure from local storage to the database in
23 response to the database becoming available.

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25 12. A method as in claim 1, further comprising:
26 archiving the image data to an archive medium;

1 recording in a catalog the location of the archive medium and at least one
2 identifier relating the archive medium to a location within an archive; and
3 offering the catalog for use by the user.
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5 13. A method as in claim 1, further comprising:
6 indexing the data structure to facilitate retrieval of the image data at a later point
7 in time.
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9 14. A method as in claim 1, wherein use by the user comprises at least one of
10 e-mailing, printing, faxing, copying, viewing, displaying, manipulating and
11 broadcasting the image data.
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13 15. A method as in claim 1, further comprising:
14 prior to step (b), a user defining the pre-defined identification data.
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16 16. A method as in claim 1, wherein the digital image is compressed using a
17 joint photographic experts group (JPEG) algorithm.
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19 17. A method as in claim 1, wherein the processing module electronically
20 captures a plurality of digital images to create a video clip.
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22 18. A method as in claim 17, wherein the video clip is compressed using a
23 motion picture experts group (MPEG) algorithm.
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1 19. In a computer system, a method for capturing and administering digital
2 images, the method comprising:

3 providing a medical video camera configured to record desired images of a
4 medical procedure;

5 electronically receiving video data from the medical video camera into an input
6 module which is configured to convert the video data into image data and buffer a
7 desired quantity of image data at any given time;

8 activating a trigger to create a trigger event;

9 in response to the trigger event, a processing module electronically capturing a
10 digital image from the image data received by the input module;

11 in response to the trigger event, the processing module creating a desired data
12 structure and storing the digital image in the data structure along with pre-defined
13 identification data;

14 storing the data structure in a database; and

15 providing a user interface such that a user is allowed to use and access a data
16 structure stored in the database from a remote location.

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18 20. A method as in claim 19, wherein the medical video camera is a camera
19 selected from the group consisting of a computerized axial tomography (CAT scan)
20 machine, an x-ray machine, a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine, a patient bed
21 monitoring camera, an arthroscope, a laparoscope, an ultrasound machine, and a general
22 purpose camera.

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24 21. A system for capturing and administering digital images, comprising:
25 an input device configured to electronically receive and buffer image data such
26 that a desired quantity of image data is available at any given time;

1 a storage device configured to maintain a database and a plurality of data
2 structures;

3 a trigger configured to create a trigger event signal;

4 a user interface configured to receive user commands and present data for use
5 by a user; and

6 a processor connected to the digital input receiver, storage device, trigger, and
7 output device and programmed to,

8 electronically capture a digital image from the input device in response to
9 the trigger event signal,

10 create a data structure and store the digital image and pre-defined
11 identification data in the data structure,

12 store the data structure in the database within the storage device, and

13 provide access to the database by way of a user interface such that a user
14 is allowed to use a data structure stored in the database.

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16 22. A system for capturing and administering digital images, comprising:
17 means for electronically receiving image data into an input module which is
18 configured to buffer a desired quantity of image data at any given time;

19 means for creating a trigger event;

20 means for responding to the trigger event and electronically capturing a digital
21 image from the image data received by the input module;

22 means for responding to the trigger event and creating a desired data structure
23 and storing the digital image in the data structure along with pre-defined identification
24 data;

25 means for storing the data structure in a database which is electronically
26 connected to the system;

1 means for providing access to the database such that a user is allowed to use a
2 data structure stored in the database.

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4 23. A system as in claim 22, further comprising:
5 an image data generating means configured to transmit image data to the means
6 for electronically receiving image data into an input module.

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8 24. A system as in claim 23, wherein the data structure comprises a database
9 record.

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11 25. A computer readable medium having stored thereon computer executable
12 instructions for performing a method for capturing and administering digital images, the
13 method comprising:

14 electronically receiving image data into an input module which is configured to
15 buffer a desired quantity of image data at any given time;

16 activating a trigger to create a trigger event;

17 in response to the trigger event, a processing module electronically capturing a
18 digital image from the image data being received by the input module;

19 further in response to the trigger event, a processing module creating a desired
20 data structure and storing the digital image in the data structure along with pre-defined
21 identification data;

22 storing the data structure in a database; and

23 providing a user interface such that a user may use a data structure stored in the
24 database.

1 26. The computer readable medium of claim 25, wherein the user interface
2 comprises a web browser configured to allow the user to access the digital image through
3 a computer network and further comprising a video signal generator generating the image
4 data.

5 27. The computer readable medium of claim 26, wherein the video signal
6 generator is a video camera.

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8 28. The computer readable medium of claim 25, wherein the trigger is
9 activated automatically based on the passage of time.

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11 29. The computer readable medium of claim 25, wherein the trigger is
12 activated manually by a user.

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14 30. The computer readable medium of claim 25, further comprising:
15 storing the data structure in the database in response to the database being
16 available; and
17 storing the data structure in local storage in response to the database being
18 unavailable.

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20 31. The computer readable medium of claim 25, further comprising:
21 initially storing the data structure in local storage in response to the database
22 being unavailable ; and
23 transferring at least one data structure from local storage to the database in
24 response to the database becoming available.

1 32. The computer readable medium of claim 25, further comprising:
2 archiving the image data to an archive medium;
3 recording in a catalog the location of the archive medium and at least one
4 identifier relating the archive medium to a location within an archive; and
5 offering the catalog for use by the user.
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